

## Hermeneutical injustice and outsourced domestic work

Article (Accepted Version)

Shahvisi, Arianne (2018) Hermeneutical injustice and outsourced domestic work. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 69. pp. 18-25. ISSN 0277-5395

This version is available from Sussex Research Online: <http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/id/eprint/74880/>

This document is made available in accordance with publisher policies and may differ from the published version or from the version of record. If you wish to cite this item you are advised to consult the publisher's version. Please see the URL above for details on accessing the published version.

### **Copyright and reuse:**

Sussex Research Online is a digital repository of the research output of the University.

Copyright and all moral rights to the version of the paper presented here belong to the individual author(s) and/or other copyright owners. To the extent reasonable and practicable, the material made available in SRO has been checked for eligibility before being made available.

Copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided that the authors, title and full bibliographic details are credited, a hyperlink and/or URL is given for the original metadata page and the content is not changed in any way.

## HERMENEUTICAL INJUSTICE AND OUTSOURCED DOMESTIC WORK

*“[H]ow do you deal with the fact that the women who clean your houses and tend your children while you attend conferences on feminist theory are, for the most part, poor women and women of Color?”* Lorde (1979).

This paper argues that conceiving of paid domestic labour as ordinary work constitutes a hermeneutical injustice against domestic workers, whose work differs from other occupations in morally significant ways. Amongst other distinctive properties, outsourced domestic work inevitably rests on gendered and racialised asymmetries of wealth and social status, consists of affective labour which is not remunerable, and occurs in a necessarily private realm which cannot be easily regulated. The obfuscation of these features by discourses which cast domestic work as ordinary work obstructs attempt to form and respond to justice claims relating to domestic work, and prevents domestic workers from recognising the innate challenges of their work. The inadequacy of this discourse seems to counsel towards condemning the practice of outsourcing domestic work, rather than attempting to recuperate it.

### 1. Introduction

Domestic work is the labour whose demand is necessarily produced by life in the private sphere. It includes, but is not limited to: cleaning, tidying, food preparation, purchasing, laundry, care of dependents, handling relationships with friends, relatives, and other external parties, and the emotional labour of diplomatically managing the implementation of these tasks. Marxist-feminist accounts of labour in the 1970s (e.g. Dalla Costa and James, 1975), typified by the Wages for Housework campaign, made a compelling case for viewing domestic work as just another form of labour in need of remuneration, rather than a traditional, unpaid duty of women. Instead of being seen as a “natural attribute of our female physique and personality, an internal need, an aspiration, supposedly coming from the depth of our female character” (Federici, 1975, p.2), scholars and activists argued that our conception of domestic work as unwaged was (and arguably remains) the “most powerful weapon in reinforcing the common assumption that housework is not work, thus preventing women from struggling against it” (*ibid.*).

There are compelling practical reasons to seek this reframing: (a) if domestic work is classified as conventional work, then those performing it may benefit from the rights and protections afforded to workers; (b) domestic work has always been undervalued on the presumption that it is unskilled, unimportant, and undesirable; reframing it as conventional work

may increase its visibility and legitimise its important social role; (c) such a view indicates that people who perform domestic work should be remunerated for it, providing many women with a source of income, which may break cycles of dependency and vulnerability; (d) governments and employers may be obliged to factor domestic work into their conceptualisations of labour in the public sphere, leading to welfare reforms, changes to care provision, and shorter or more flexible working hours.

Such a view promises to improve the conditions of many women globally, who continue to bear the burden of unpaid domestic work in their households, even where their participation in the paid workforce matches that of the men of their communities.<sup>1</sup> However, I will argue that we should be cautious in how this rhetoric is applied, as it seems to mask the uniqueness of domestic work, and is particularly specious in the case of *outsourced* domestic work, i.e. that undertaken by workers who are not members of the household. This is because there are several important senses in which outsourced domestic work is substantively different from ordinary work, both in its performance and in its social context. Ignoring or diminishing those differences may entrench extant lacunae in our collective epistemic resources, which could obstruct changes to the broader context of the work, and consign domestic workers to a marginalisation that is further confounded. The thesis of this article is straightforward: describing outsourced domestic work as ordinary work is inaccurate and obfuscating. It disguises from policy-makers, employers, and, mostly importantly, domestic workers *themselves*, that domestic work is founded on injustices, and that these injustices are intrinsic to it.

To place this discussion in its broader context: most outsourced housework and care-work globally is performed within high-income settings by racialized migrant women from the Global South (ILO, 2015). The demand for domestic workers is rising (Tomei, 2011). There are almost twelve million migrant domestic workers globally, more than half of whom work in Arab states, North America, and Europe (Gallotti, 2015, pp. 1-2). Globally, migrant domestic workers experience a range of injustices, including: excessively long working hours, low pay, delayed or unpaid salaries, inadequate living spaces, physical and verbal abuse, sexual harassment and abuse, confiscation of passports, and lack of access to legal protections (Gemma *et al.* 2016; Begum, 2016; ILO, 2013). Care-work and domestic work is the largest employment sector for migrant women working in the EU, and the majority of these workers are undocumented (Rodríguez, 2007, p. 65; Kontos, 2013).

Migration traces coloniality in that migrants tend to choose destinations with whose language and culture they are already familiar, often as a

---

<sup>1</sup> For UK data, see e.g. Office of National Statistics; for US data, see American Time Use Survey, 2016.

vestige of colonialism (Hooghe *et al.* 2008), while the immigration policies of those states are informed by neo-colonialism (Fassin, 2011; Tronto, 2011). Domestic work also instantiates postcolonial relations within the countries to which domestic workers migrate, where they are generally denied full citizenship, receive low pay, and are considered to be suited to what is constructed as low-status work. Relatedly, the social meaning of migrant domestic work in the Global North descends from domestic work performed by enslaved women, which provides an early example of the racialized domestic worker, a template which has since been replicated across the world. hooks (1981, pp. 84-5) describes the stereotype of the “black mammy” figure of plantation and antebellum households: a passive, submissive woman, rendered unthreatening by her asexuality, obesity, and poor hygiene, who was devoted to the white people she cared for. As Bakan and Stasiulis note: “One purpose of such ideological stereotyping has been to portray a fictive, universal nonwhite, female, noncitizen Other whose biological and ostensibly natural makeup ascribe as inherently appropriate for private domestic service” (1995, pp. 318-319).

While in the Americas and Europe, migrant domestic workers have replaced enslaved women and women of the servant class, in Arab States the genealogy of the profession is somewhat different. There, migrant domestic workers replace workers previously employed from poor, rural areas. The “kafala” legal system, which originates in customs of Bedouin hospitality (Vora and Koch, 2015), allows families to provide sponsorship for a domestic worker to be imported. The domestic worker must then reside within the employer’s home, has no right to work elsewhere, nor recourse to national labour laws (Human Rights Watch, 2013).

States from which domestic workers migrate have typically undergone structural adjustment to repay debts to Global North states and institutions, resulting in the decimation of public services, which affects women—as primary caregivers—disproportionately (Afshar 2016; Sparr, 1994). Women migrate in order to earn higher salaries abroad as domestic workers, sending their earnings home to assist their own families. Sending states often encourage migration as their economies benefit from the remittances (Moors, 2003, p.388). This has allowed receiving states to inexpensively address a growing “care deficit” (Parreñas, 2003) as increasing numbers of women have entered the public workforce, and Global North populations grow older. Sending states then inherit this care deficit as many primary caregivers make the pragmatic decision to serve foreign households (Kittay, 2009). This situation is premised on a substantial Global South-North pay/poverty differential, and the rigidity of gender norms across the world. Hochschild describes this extraction of care as a “global heart transplant” (2002, p.22), in which the value generated by emotional labour is mined from one world region in order to meet the needs of another world region.

Unless otherwise stated, I use “domestic worker” to denote those who perform domestic work for pay in other people’s homes.<sup>2</sup> I define domestic work to include any or all of the housework and caring work that takes place within a household for the benefit of the members of that household. The analysis presented within this paper is more pertinent to some situations than others; a live-in migrant domestic worker is differently positioned to a cleaner or carer who lives elsewhere. While I hope that my arguments could stretch to both, the first case is my primary target, and it is left to the reader to decide the extent to which the analysis applies to other arrangements of outsourced domestic work. I am also primarily concerned with migrant domestic workers, as they constitute the majority of the workforce. Of foremost concern of all is in this analysis is *undocumented* live-in migrant domestic workers.

This paper is structured as follows: In section two I will introduce the idea of a hermeneutical injustice, and describe the way in which the “ordinary job” discourse contributes to a hermeneutical injustice in relation to domestic work. In section three, I detail the reasons why we should challenge this discourse and its concomitant hermeneutical injustice. I return to the idea of hermeneutical injustice in section four, and suggest ways in which the framing of domestic work could be corrected. Section five concludes.

## **2. Hermeneutical Injustice**

Miranda Fricker (2007) coins the term “epistemic injustice” to describe a particular sort of injustice that occurs when a person is wronged in her social capacity as a knower. We belong to epistemic communities, within which we produce, exchange, and use knowledge. Injustices occur when particular groups are marginalised within the knowledge community, so that members of that group are rendered: less able to *produce* knowledge, because they are excluded from spaces of knowledge production; less able to *exchange* knowledge, because the value of their testimony is deflated; or less able to *use* knowledge, because knowledge production is dominated by other groups, and the resulting knowledge either ignores or obscures their experiences.

This last species of epistemic injustice is “hermeneutical injustice,” defined as “the injustice of having some significant area of one’s social experience obscured from collective understanding owing to hermeneutical marginalization” (2007, p.158). Fricker’s paradigm example of hermeneutical injustice is the case of the sexual harassment of Carmita Woods in 1975, before the term and concept “sexual harassment” were

---

<sup>2</sup> I distinguish this from care-work or domestic work that is sought or provided for disabled people, or people with long-term medical problems, which I view as a form of welfare.

recognised. Woods left her job as a result of the harassment, and struggled to claim compensation since she could not adequately describe the situation that had caused her to resign. By speaking with other women who had similar experiences, Woods and others were able to distil a meaningful common concept, and to give it a name: sexual harassment. The absence of this concept and term prior to the consciousness-raising work of these women, and the adverse consequences of being unable to make their experiences understandable, is an example of hermeneutical injustice.

Hermeneutical injustice therefore occurs when members of a marginalised group are unable to find, within the collective conceptual tools, a way to construe experiences that are critical to understanding their own situation. This paucity in the resources for apprehension of certain situations is not accidental. Hermeneutical injustices arise because the collective epistemic tools are developed within structurally unjust societies in which the interpretative resources are skewed in favour of understanding those phenomena that are useful to, and protective of, privileged groups. This bias arises because privileged groups have more of a determinative influence on the collective vocabulary and interpretative resources.<sup>3</sup> Oppressed peoples are then subject to an additional injustice: that of being prevented from fully understanding aspects of their oppression (and *ipso facto*, prevented from changing it) by a gap in the collective epistemic resources. Members of marginalised groups subject to hermeneutical injustices may experience distress or cognitive dissonance in relation to their inability to make their discomfort understood by others.

Instances of hermeneutical injustice often collaborate with myths which entrench norms to disguise injustices (see e.g. Jenkins, 2017). In the case of sexual harassment, myths about what is “normal” behaviour for men undoubtedly stood in the way of identifying Woods’ male colleague’s behaviour as unacceptable. In the next section I will identify the cognate myths that obstruct us from correctly interpreting domestic work in a way that is just to those who perform it. Then I will explore the reasons why that myth should not be supported, and discuss the conclusions this entails.

## **2.1 Myths about domestic work**

A hermeneutical injustice is at work in relation to outsourced domestic work, which prevents domestic workers and their employers from confronting the injustices that underwrite their employment. A widespread myth acts as a vehicle for this hermeneutical injustice: that outsourced domestic work may be understood as an ordinary job, a “job like any other” (e.g. Uramoto, 2014), or that it *ought* to be understood in this way in order to improve the working conditions of domestic workers (e.g. Anderson, 2004, 2001; Begum, 2016). Accepting this myth requires one to

---

<sup>3</sup> That is part of what it means to be privileged.

ignore profound and irreconcilable differences between domestic work and other forms of work: notably, that domestic work is *affective* labour performed in a *private* space which exists because of *inequalities* between groups of people.

There are in fact two myths at work in relation to domestic work. Though *prima facie* they seem contradictory, they merely serve different purposes, and place outsourced domestic workers in a double bind. The first is that domestic work is not work at all. This myth is very common and is supported by the belief that domestic work is easy or even pleasant (by virtue of being relaxing or meditative), or that it is a natural matrimonial duty of women. This myth benefits men everywhere, but it also benefits employers in the public sphere, who can design shift patterns and working weeks which rely upon unpaid workers (generally women), replenishing their workers for continued labour. A second myth is that outsourced domestic work is an ordinary occupation. This myth benefits wealthy men and women, whose wealth renders them able to pass on their domestic duties to poorer women.

These two myths operate in conjunction, composing a doubly confounded image of domestic work that serves to obscure important realities about its nature. Non-domestic workers are also affected by the epistemic lacunae, but the myth does not obscure a central part of their personal experience in a way which is harmful. The first myth underwrites a hermeneutical injustice which primarily affects domestic workers who work in their *own* households; the second underwrites a hermeneutical injustice that affects domestic workers who work in the households of *others*, who are also affected by the second myth to the extent that it depreciates the worth of their work. Since an expansive literature is devoted to the first myth,<sup>4</sup> my analysis will focus on the second myth.

While a hermeneutical injustice may be addressed by consciousness-raising, tackling the associated non-epistemic injustices is more difficult. Yet the subsequent knowledge is necessarily transformative of the relations in which the subject of the injustice stands, for the realisation of the hermeneutical injustice invokes a moral urgency for the facilitative relations to be changed. The injustices in which outsourced domestic work is couched are necessary conditions for the work. By uncovering the hermeneutical injustice, the underlying injustice becomes obvious, and so too does the realisation that the work reflects more general moral issues with the global labour market.

### 3. Unpacking the “ordinary work” discourse

---

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. Ferguson et al. (2016) and references therein.

In this section I will outline the reasons why domestic work cannot, and should not, be classified as ordinary work. I describe seven related features that are distinctive of outsourced domestic work but are rarely, or only contingently, features of other work.

### **3.1 A necessary asymmetry**

Glenn (1986) describes the personalism and asymmetry which characterise domestic work: domestic workers are a part of their employers' intimate lives, but they are only permitted to be so because of a considerable difference in social status. Outsourced domestic work necessarily involves an asymmetric social and economic positioning of the employer and the employee. Households appoint domestic workers in order to be able to engage in activities that are deemed to be more important, enjoyable, or rewarding than doing domestic work, at the same time knowing that the domestic worker will have her own load of domestic work increased. Romero (1997) asks “Who takes care of the maid’s children?” and one could reasonably ask a whole series of other questions: who cleans the maid’s house? Who prepares the maid’s food? What opportunities does the maid have for leisure?

Domestic work differs from other forms of labour because *every* person creates a need for domestic work (in the form of: food and other necessities, a clean environment, and care towards dependents), yet not everyone can pay another person to take on that work. One can divide the world into those who serve others’ domestic needs, and those whose domestic needs are served. These are very distinct categories. Whilst there are many other forms of low-paid work (e.g. table-waiting/bartending, hairdressing, kitchen work, laundering, retail cashiering), the people employed in these roles can feasibly afford to be served by others from within this category, so this divide is much less sharp. Retail cashiers habitually buy the labour of hairdressers and bartenders, and vice versa. In a radically-transformed world of equal pay (say) these roles would still exist, but it would very likely no longer make sense for there to be outsourced domestic work, since it is contingent on unequal pay.<sup>5</sup> That is the *economic* side of the asymmetry.

The asymmetry also has a *social* aspect. Across cultures, domestic work is assigned a negative valence: as being repetitive, boring, dirty, unrewarding, and tiring (Looker and Thiessen, 1999; Dempsey, 2001). Being free of domestic work—as time and energy are reclaimed—creates opportunities to pursue a demanding career or engage in hobbies, spend

---

<sup>5</sup> Consider the option of eliminating the asymmetry by insisting that employers pay their domestic workers at an hourly rate which matches their own salary, in order to explicitly place equal value on the domestic worker's labour. In almost all cases, employing a live-in domestic worker would cease to make sense, and employers would likely perform their own labour.



leisure time with family and friends, or simply relax. Gutierrez-Rodriguez (2014, p.48) notes that the outsourcing of domestic work to another person “enables the household to engage with positive feelings, which affect the household and its members in animating ways, while the domestic worker takes on the negative affective burden ingrained in this work.” Through Gutierrez-Rodriguez’s ethnographic work in Hamburg, one sees both sides of the asymmetry, and the awareness that the employer *could* do their own work. Domestic worker Elena describes the absurdity of her work as follows:

But these things to unpack them all and clean them—that was it for me. For me it was actually closeness to a person who I actually do not know and who can actually do it himself. And I couldn’t understand how somebody—so close, yeah, allows someone to come, without knowing the person and without actually needing it. I find that totally *absurd* (2010, p.130).

While Karin, an employer of a domestic worker, gives the view from the other side:

There is simply a point in time when one asks oneself do I still feel like cleaning the toilet on a Sunday evening at around eleven and to make the bed, which I *can* naturally do but I don’t feel like it anymore and I gave it up. [...] [I]t is important sometimes for one’s *own* battery to say, okay, I drink a cup of tea for a half an hour and don’t do these things (2010, p.134).

Karin’s sentiment plainly expresses the inequality that is at work. She can give up something that she is capable of doing but no longer wants to do. She does so for her own “battery,” for her wellbeing. Yet the wellbeing of the domestic worker—who has twice (or more) the drain on her “battery”—is not considered. Their difference in wealth and social positioning is supposed to explain the outsourcing which redistributes this burden, while the payment of a salary is presumed to excuse it.

Outsourced domestic work relies upon the assumption that it is acceptable for some people to transfer their intimate labour to others, admitting they could do it themselves, knowing it is draining and unpleasant, and in the full awareness that the domestic worker will have to perform her own intimate labour in addition to theirs. This is what makes domestic work unique: we all, by our sheer existence, need domestic work to be done. Clothing will be dirtied, dishes will pile up, bathrooms will smell, and stomachs will rumble. These are necessary consequences of human living.

In relation to the caring components of domestic work—caring for or serving others—Kittay (2009) draws attention to the opportunity cost to the personal relationships of domestic workers, whose emotional

attachments are neglected or put on hold in order to provide emotional work to others. Further, the new emotional bonds that domestic workers invariably form through care-work, particularly towards children, are not within their control. A domestic worker may care for a child for many years, and have more contact with the child than the parents, but ultimately have no claim over the child, and no right to maintain that relationship should the employment contract end (Anderson, 2001, p.31).

Lutz (*ibid*) notes that very few employers of domestic workers seem cognisant of “the genuine asymmetry of this relation and of the self-deception that is connected to the construction of domestic work as ‘just an ordinary service delivery’” (p.56). This indicates that the employer is also influenced by the myth, though it cannot rightly be called a hermeneutical *injustice* since the myth is facilitative of the employment of a person into an asymmetric relationship while the employer maintains a clear conscience.

Meagher (2002, p.58) argues that it is morally objectionable to pay for shoe-shining, because it entails one person sat at the feet of another in a public place, in which the social positioning of the bodies of the shiner and the shined, as well as the act of non-medically caring for the feet of another person, are symbolic of inequality. So too does it seem that the sense of domestic work relies upon the difference in social positioning of the employers and the domestic worker.

### **3.2 Race, gender, and devaluation**

Domestic work, whether outsourced or not, is primarily performed by women. Data shows that men in France and Germany spent just 47% of the time that women spend performing housework; men in the UK and Australia fared marginally better at 50%, and in Sweden, which is famed for its gender equality, men spent 71% of the time women spent on housework (Sayer, 2000, p. 28). The dialectic of feminisation is at work: domestic work is undervalued *because* it is largely performed by women (and, where it is outsourced, usually racialized women), but it is also *why* it is largely performed by women. The devaluation of housework is not merely accidental, rather, it is a natural consequence of social value tracking the interests of the powerful.

Despite many women entering traditionally male-dominated spheres in public employment, there has been little progress towards men adopting the private roles traditionally performed by women.<sup>6</sup> This has two effects: it means that for many women, “having it all” invariably means “doing it

---

<sup>6</sup> The extent of the gendering of domestic work is seen in households in which women begin to earn more than their husbands. Data shows that in these cases, men tend to experience “gender role threat,” which causes them to undertake less domestic work as a way of protecting their masculinity (Besen-Cassino and Cassino, 2014).

all”: accepting a double burden of private and public responsibility (Kay, 2013). Second, it entrenches the idea that the struggle for gender equality does not require men to change their practices, or the reorganisation of the public realm.

Outsourced domestic work provides a conduit for preserving gender norms while allowing middle-class women to claim some of the privileges traditionally reserved for men, and for men to avoid having those privileges destabilised. So although outsourced domestic work often correlates with increased participation of women in the workforce,<sup>7</sup> the statistics disguise the reality of relatively intact private gender norms. While wealthier women appear to disrupt traditional gender roles by pursuing demanding careers, in these cases they do so by entrenching another gender role by employing a woman of a “lower” class or race to perform the domestic work. Gender norms are conserved, but diffused along lines of race, class, and nationality. Anderson rightly wonders whether “managing a domestic worker openly is a more attractive option than attempting to manage men covertly” (2001, p. 27). Of course, from a moral perspective, the root problem is that men’s contribution to domestic labour remains inadequate.

Outsourced domestic work is invariably performed by women of colour and-or migrant women. So as one woman releases herself from the negative connotations of performing domestic work, she passes that negativity on to another woman. Domestic work stubbornly retains its negative associations, but is shifted further down the social hierarchy. This simultaneously entrenches the social hierarchy and reinforces the low value of the work. Racism plays an important role in making it seem more acceptable to pass on low-status work to a person who is deemed to be low-status herself. In a globalised world, perceived racial differences mimic the class differences which underwrote older forms of domestic service (Busch, 2013).

Employing a domestic worker is seen in many cases as a sign of social distinction, acting as a class marker for the employers (Anderson, 2000, p.20). One might think of the employment of domestic workers as a way of producing “conspicuous leisure” (Veblen, 1899), for members of the household, who are able to pay to exempt themselves from household labour. In this vein, domestic workers may be asked to perform tasks whose primary function is to exhibit the employers’ status, rather than creating any obvious value (Davidson, 2002, p.92). One such example is being asked to clean a pet’s anus after each defecation (Anderson, 2000, p.26).

---

<sup>7</sup> And itself increases women in the workforce, since domestic workers are largely women.

In Lebanon, this social distinction is further coded by the race of the domestic worker, according to racist stereotypes regarding the competence and diligence of particular races. Lighter-skinned workers are considered to warrant higher salaries, and are therefore symbolic of the family's ability to pay (Jureidini and Moukarbel, 2004, p.6). Similar racist hierarchies of domestic workers have been noted in Portugal (Pereira, 2013, p.1145), the United States (Hill Maher, 2003), and Canada (Bakan and Stasiulis, 1995, pp. 310-313).

### **3.3 Objectification and commodification**

When a household employs a resident domestic worker, a salary is exchanged for not only her cognitive and manual labour power, but also a share of her emotional labour. The household is paying not only for the work to take place, but for the person who performs that labour to be agreeable, and to make the living environment more pleasant in ways that extend beyond the work itself. Domestic work is characterised by a strong *affective* component (e.g. Gutierrez-Rodriguez, 2014). A domestic worker in the company of household members is expected to appear grateful for the work, to be attentive without being assertive, to withhold her own emotions and present a neutral or positive countenance, and to tactfully disguise her awareness of the power dynamic at work, so as to minimise the awkwardness of the encounter.

This affective labour is performed invisibly alongside other domestic duties, and maintains a civil degree of separation between herself and the household, such that they may exist in comfort in their own home in the awareness that a stranger is sometimes present. In this sense, domestic workers perform their ordinary responsibilities alongside the unspoken duty of meticulously maintaining a dynamic of distance and servitude which underscores the fact that their work relies on their instrumentalisation and their collaboration in presenting their personhood as inferior. This “boundary work” is required in order for a domestic worker to live alongside an employer whilst respecting the social and economic gulf between them, both in order to minimise discomfort in their employers, and to maintain their own sense of identity and demarcate their own private worlds (e.g. Lan, 2003). There is a need to constantly negotiate the distance between employer and employee in terms of social status. Whilst employers *also* engage in boundary work, they do so from a position of relative power.

Because of the cognitive dissonance of having a person present in the household who is not a member of the household or a guest, the domestic worker may be reconceived by her employers as a non-person; a bought commodity with the functionality of a gadget or item of furniture, but no subjectivity of her own. Constable describes the way in which the websites of agencies in Hong Kong advertise each domestic worker “as though she

were an inanimate household appliance: she comes in various models, goes on sale, includes a warranty, and can easily be replaced if the customer is not satisfied” (1997, p.62). This is not only intrinsically problematic, since the domestic worker is objectified, it also increases vulnerability, since objects do not mandate the same respect as subjects. This is undoubtedly one reason for the alarming levels of violence and exploitation that domestic workers experience.

### **3.4 Not remunerable**

In market-exchange terms, domestic labour patently has enormous use-value. Outsourced domestic labour becomes a market-exchange, where money is exchanged for the commodity of household labour (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 2010, p.90). Not only is domestic work underpaid by any metric, but the value that is extracted from domestic workers in the form of the affective labour they perform as they negotiate the private worlds of strangers defies economic exchange logics, and resembles the emotional labour that sustains non-professional relationships. Further, duties and shifts are often open-ended. As such, it is not easily quantified.

The inadequate remuneration of reproductive labour is key to the possibility of capital accumulation in advanced capitalism: that certain people (usually racialized women) perform essential work with little or no reward under the widely accepted myth that their work is not productive, permits others to accumulate capital (see e.g. Federici, 2012). Conversely, in order for this exploitative extraction to seem permissible, the subjects must be themselves devalued. Then we see that the “feminized and racialized character of this labor is not a coincidence, but its social disposition and cultural predication through which the devaluation of this labor is predetermined and reified. It is always clear then who does the cleaning” (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 2010, p. 104).

Of course, one may claim that other forms of labour which have affective components are also not easily quantified, and therefore difficult to remunerate. All roles within the service and care industries of the tertiary sector (e.g. entertainment, healthcare, education, professional services) have a significant affective component, yet the *non-affective* aspects of these roles are typically not so under-valued. Further, live-in domestic workers do not have easy access to spaces in which they may “switch off” this affective labour, whereas other jobs tend to have well-defined shifts.

### **3.5 Not meritocratic**

Lutz (2012, p.49) examines the possibility of fully-professionalised domestic work. One major difficulty with bringing domestic work into conventional labour frameworks is that it does not follow meritocratic principles. There is no way of cataloguing or measuring progress or

achievements within the work, whose goalposts may constantly change according to the whims of the members of the household.

Domestic work not only lacks prestige, in many cases it simply lacks recognition: it is invisible. It must be done, but its Sisyphean goal is the constant reproduction of liveable environments and cared-for people. Since the goal is a static state, there is an inevitable invisibility: visibility is tantamount to failure. Contracts are generally non-existent or open-ended, and duties may vary considerably from day to day. Above all, the work is erroneously considered to require competencies that everyone possesses equally or can gain with minimal effort or instruction. This means that there is little scope for improvement and reward, and certainly no possibility of meaningful progression. It also means that it is widely believed that anyone who possessed other competencies would be able to find employment in another sector, so that domestic workers are often deemed to be people who are suited to nothing else.

This last set of views is, of course, insupportable. Domestic work *can* be done well or badly, is improved with practice, is often taught (e.g. by parents to children). As Rodríguez (2007, p.73) notes, domestic work ought not to be described as unskilled when it requires “psychological, educational, intercultural, and technical skills, and demands time management, flexibility, and mobility.” It also generally involves strong language skills, since the majority of domestic workers are migrants, for whom the language of the host country may be a second, or even a third, language. The insistence on describing outsourced domestic work as unskilled serves the function of entrenching the existing hegemony within which it is devalued. Yet it is important to draw a line between the skills sought in an *outsourced* domestic worker, and those required when performing one’s *own* domestic work. Because it is also true that domestic work, unlike other kinds of work, is easily performed to an adequate level by almost every adult who applies some minimal time and effort. This makes it distinct from other forms of low-paid work (e.g. hairdressing, nursing, administrative assistance), which one cannot undertake at all without specific training.

### **3.6 A necessary privacy**

Outsourced domestic work necessarily takes place in the home of the employer. Depending on the nature of the work, it may involve direct contact with members of the household (caring for or serving household members and their guests), but it will always involve the negotiation of the objects in the household, and the emotions those objects are laden with. Given that the household is the primary site of reproduction for its members, a location of privacy, refreshment, relaxation and identity formation, the domestic worker necessarily inhabits that space on alien terms, since it is her workplace, and she cannot influence the “habitus” of

the household (c.f. Lutz, 2012, p. 50), but must instead dissolve her own selfhood in that space, and accept the terms of those around her.

In an attempt at kindness or charity, or in order to mitigate the obvious dissonance of having elected to grant an “outsider” access to an intimate space, many households insist on describing their domestic worker as “one of the family.” Akalin (2007) describes the way in which domestic workers in Turkey become “fictitious family members” (209) as a covert way of assigning heavier and less well-defined workloads. Miles (1997), drawing on ethnographic work in Swaziland, notes that being described as “one of the family” generally has negative consequences, often resulting in lower and less reliable wages and the expectation of additional favours, on the basis that the domestic worker’s emotional link will afford her an understanding of the needs and limitations of the family. “Incorporating a domestic worker into the family circle is usually, though not always, a sure way of depressing wages and possibly hiding even the most discreet forms of exploitation involved in the employer-employee relationship” (p.207). Such disingenuously exploitative attitudes from employers in such a precarious and invisible context are unique to the private and highly individualised relationship embodied by outsourced domestic work.

The fact that domestic work necessarily occurs in a private space poses a considerable barrier to effective regulation, and leaves domestic workers at risk of violence and exploitation. Attempts to properly police employment in private spaces would not only be difficult (Chen, 2011), but would likely be prohibitively unpopular,<sup>8</sup> and perhaps worthless, since inspectors could not easily observe private dynamics, and the social capital of employers would likely privilege conflicts in their favour.

It must also be noted that the proportion of domestic workers who are undocumented is high; in the EU, a significant proportion of care-workers and domestic workers are undocumented (Anderson, 2001b). This is because of the prevalence of visa systems<sup>9</sup> which tie workers to their employers, preventing them from accessing the regular labour market. Domestic workers escaping abusive or exploitative employers are then forced to become undocumented (see e.g. Mantouvalou, 2016). Once undocumented, these workers are additionally vulnerable to exploitative employment, and continuing to work in the private realm becomes a necessity in order to avoid detention and/or deportation.

---

<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the UK’s abstention from the International Labour Organization’s “Convention concerning decent work for domestic workers” was partly motivated by concerns that regulating the private domain would be unjustifiably intrusive. One parliamentarian stated that “I do not believe that the people I visit would welcome inspections of their homes, which would be very intrusive.” (HC Deb 29 June 2011 col 291WH).

<sup>9</sup> e.g. The Overseas Domestic Worker visa in the UK or the Kafala sponsorship system in Arab states.

Another aspect of this privacy is that domestic workers do not generally have colleagues, and are likely to be the only employee of their household, and, *ipso facto*, the only person in the space who is not a full member of the household. In other low-paid jobs, workers typically have companionship, and people with whom they could, at least in principle, collectively apply pressure in the event of inadequate working conditions, or report poor working conditions once their employment has terminated, in order to support those still employed.

Whilst moves towards increased organisation of domestic labour are encouraging, such as the recent unionisation of domestic workers in Lebanon (Shahvisi, 2015), the fact that so many migrant domestic workers are undocumented is likely to frustrate attempts to wield union power. Such strategies are limited where policies towards immigration are increasingly draconian (i.e. across Europe). Moreover, legislative attempts to increase or harness the collective bargaining power of domestic workers have generally not been successful (Blackett, 2011, 42).

There is no easy way of transforming domestic work into an ordinary job. It will always take place in private spaces, which are very difficult to regulate without breaking down the barriers between public and private, which would seem to remove the possibility of domestic work in its current form.

### **3.7 Easily converted from paid to unpaid labour.**

Domestic work is work that *can* be performed by members of the household. Whether or not it is outsourced depends largely on household income. And since household income can and does fluctuate,<sup>10</sup> the paid labour that is performed by domestic workers can be, and is, shifted over to unpaid labour performed by members of the household (usually women). In those cases, what was previously seen as an ordinary employment opportunity for a poorer woman becomes converted into a personal household duty, “performed as family or neighbourly service” (Lutz, p. 57).

This convertibility of domestic work, its quality of being sometimes outsourced and sometimes not, is somewhat unique. Whilst other tasks (i.e. home repairs or improvements, gardening, removal services) are also likely to be outsourced in times of relative wealth, and otherwise attempted by household members, these tend to be instances of occasional labour, rather than regular, reproductive labour, and it remains the norm that these forms of work *are* outsourced.

---

<sup>10</sup> Consider also that households migrate to places in which they cannot afford to pay a domestic worker, or where it is less socially-acceptable to do so.



It seems as though unless *all* domestic labour is professionalised, none can be, for it will always be viewed as work that can, might, and perhaps even *should*, be performed by household members. And since total professionalization is improbable within the current system, since economies function as they do on the basis of a constant supply of free reproductive labour,<sup>11</sup> it seems that domestic work will never simply be a job like any other, but will always be a symbol of wealth and luxury, and a marker of inequality.

#### **4. Changing the discourse**

In the previous section I argued that outsourced domestic work differs from other forms of labour in seven related senses. Of course, other jobs share some of these properties, but often only contingently, and to a lesser extent. Without due consideration of the significant differences between ordinary labour and domestic labour, one cannot simply subsume outsourced domestic labour under the same umbrella as conventional labour and hope for the best. And given these differences, it seems unlikely, and conceivably impossible, that those states ratifying the International Labour Organization’s (ILO, 2011) convention on “decent work for domestic workers” will ever be able to meet its aim of ensuring that domestic workers “enjoy fair terms of employment as well as decent working conditions” (Article 6). Rather, as the ILO itself notes in passing, we must recognise the “special conditions under which domestic work is carried out” (preamble). Blackett also wonders whether “paid domestic work with its historically laden subordinate status can be decent work at all” (2011, p.42).

Two challenges stand in the way of a world in which outsourced domestic work would no longer make sense. The first is global inequality, which creates the gradients of wealth and opportunity which motivate migration of women from the Global South. The second is the challenge of patterns of work which do not account for the centrality of reproductive labour. As such, this discussion of migrant domestic work is part of a much broader discourse concerning these two closely related problems.

Despite arguing that outsourced domestic work is not “work like any other,” it is nonetheless *work*. It is the labour that is generated by our own private lives. It should be possible for domestic work to be shared between adult members of a household in (gender) equitable ways, facilitated by state or industry infrastructural support, within a model in which work in the public realm does not preclude or devalue the work in the private realm upon which it depends. This could be achieved by changes to working

---

<sup>11</sup> Gutierrez-Rodriguez (2010, p.91) draws attention to the claim made by feminists in the 1970s that it is unlikely that any national or private budget could obtain the funds to meet the actual value produced by domestic work.

hours which recognise the need to accommodate reproductive labour. Clearly, it will be those with the greatest social power who will have the best chance of successfully lobbying for these changes, but since those with the greatest social power are the least likely to currently undertake reproductive labour, the outlook seems pessimistic.

Another target for short-term change are the visa systems (common in the EU and Arab states) that prevent migrant domestic workers from accessing the general labour market, condemning them to indentured labour. Under a reformed system, employers would be incentivised to improve working conditions in order to retain workers. However, a likely by-product would be that as documented workers have access to other forms of employment, undocumented migrants with fewer employment options would fill these positions. The privacy of the workplace for domestic work will likely always be a draw for those who are most vulnerable by virtue of their lack of recourse to the legal system, just as it will be a draw for employers seeking cheap, unregulated household labour. Under the cover of this privacy, regulation is very limited (see e.g. Stasiulis and Bakan, 1997). This is why it is morally important to also reform the demand for the work as well as worrying about the conditions which produce the supply.

Returning to the myths introduced in section two, I reject the first myth—that domestic work is not work—but I also reject the second myth—that domestic work is ordinary work. There seems to be no way for the outsourcing of domestic work not to embody the idea that some people’s time, leisure, or well-being is worth more than that of others. Framing domestic work as ordinary work is not fair towards domestic workers, who experience the challenges described in section three as part of their daily work, but are asked to nonetheless operate under the belief that their work is just like the work of others, except perhaps for its difference in status. This is deeply disingenuous, and commits a hermeneutical injustice against domestic workers.

The aim of this paper is modest: it calls only for a shift in the discourse around outsourced domestic work. Organisations such as the International Labour Organization, and Human Rights Watch, as well as academics and activists, could play a key role in changing their portrayal of migrant domestic work, and placing greater responsibility on nation states to discourage their citizens from hiring domestic workers, while at the same time ensuring that migrant women have access to better-protected labour markets. “Decent work” does not happen in unregulable spaces, in asymmetric contexts, and consist of labour that has long been devalued and extracted from women for free, and is now passed on to racialised women of the Global South for low pay. Outsourced domestic work is *not* decent work, and cannot be, and domestic workers should not have to toil in the shadow of that claim.

Maintaining a discourse which insists that if only each of their individual employers would be fairer in their treatment of the woman they employ, then outsourced domestic work will move closer to ordinary work, is dishonest. To instead point out that outsourced domestic work is intrinsically degrading is not to debase domestic workers, but to shame the system that produces both the demand and supply for this work. The reasons outlined in the previous section are mere arguments, but at the core of each is a felt experience for domestic workers, whose loneliness and frustration within the work may well be mitigated (if only slightly) by the knowledge that their work really *is* different from ordinary work. Whilst it can be small compensation, it is nonetheless useful to know, in the midst of one’s struggle, that one’s work is unique in its difficulties.

Of course, abolishing outsourced domestic work can only be a long-term objective. And, as with many feminist debates—sex work being the most prominent example—what is perceived to be the ultimate long-term aim does not necessarily engender the most humane short-term strategy, and the two may very well seem contradictory. Pushing for better working conditions for domestic workers in the short-term is inarguably the right strategy, but in parallel, we should be reframing the debate so that its foundations come under moral scrutiny. In doing so, it pays to reflect critically on the ways in which interlocutors on this debate are likely to be situated: it is not infeasible that middle-class academics, as potential employers of domestic workers, may be inclined to be particularly defensive.

## **5. Conclusion**

In this paper I have argued that outsourced domestic work is significantly different from conventional work, a fact which has been disguised by a widespread discourse which aims to portray outsourced domestic work as work that might one day, with concerted effort, become fair work. I contend that outsourced domestic work is not ordinary work because: it relies on an asymmetry of social positioning, including gendered and racialised dimensions, and dehumanising objectification; it cannot be adequately remunerated and does not follow meritocratic principles; it occurs in private spaces which cannot be regulated, and it can easily be converted from paid to unpaid labour.

While protection of domestic workers is a vital short-term concern for activists and policy-makers, there are limits to the extent to which the work can be performed in contexts which are not characterised by wealth, gender, and race inequalities. This signals that there are serious issues with its moral foundations which are likely to survive any policy changes.

My objective is to draw attention to the injustice of the fiction that outsourced domestic work is ordinary work, and to encourage challenges

to this discourse even as we work collectively towards improving the working lives of those currently engaged in domestic work. The hope is that domestic workers themselves can reconcile their feelings with respect to their work with the reality that the conditions of their work are unacceptable in ways that are intrinsic to its context. Domestic work is degrading, but not because it is “dirty work” (after all, colorectal surgery is dirty work) but because it depends upon one person's leisure, wellbeing, and worth being valued above another's, and given the privacy of the work, there is no way of knowing when or whether these inequalities have been eliminated.

## 6. References

Afshar, H., & Dennis, C. (Eds.). (2016). *Women and adjustment policies in the third world*. Springer.

<http://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9780333537435>

Akalin, A. (2007). Hired as a caregiver, demanded as a housewife: Becoming a migrant domestic worker in Turkey. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 14(3), 209-225.

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1350506807079011>

American Time Use Survey. (2016) American Time Use Survey Summary. *Bureau of Labor Statistics*

<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/atus.nr0.htm>

Anderson, B. (2004). Migrant domestic workers and slavery. In *The political economy of new slavery* (pp. 107-117). Palgrave Macmillan UK.

[http://www.untag-smd.ac.id/files/Perpustakaan\\_Digital\\_2/POLITICAL%20ECONOMY%20The%20political%20economy%20of%20new%20slavery.pdf#page=124](http://www.untag-smd.ac.id/files/Perpustakaan_Digital_2/POLITICAL%20ECONOMY%20The%20political%20economy%20of%20new%20slavery.pdf#page=124)

Anderson, B. (2001b). Why Madam has so many bathrobes?: demand for migrant workers in the EU. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 92(1), 18-26.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-9663.00136/full>

Anderson, B. (2001). Just another job? Paying for domestic work. *Gender & Development*, 9(1), 25-33.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13552070127731#.VboXy2O8-WU>

Anderson, B. (2000). *Doing the dirty work?: The global politics of domestic labour*. Palgrave Macmillan.

<http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/distributed/D/bo20848781.html>

Bakan, A. B., & Stasiulis, D. K. (1995). Making the match: Domestic placement agencies and the racialization of women's household work. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 20(2), 303-335.

<http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/494976?journalCode=signs>

Begum, R. (2016) Migrant Domestic Workers: Overworked and Underprotected. *Women Across Frontiers*, 4.

<http://wafmag.org/2016/06/migrant-domestic-workers-overworked-underprotected/>

Besen-Cassino, Y., & Cassino, D. (2014). Division of House Chores and the Curious Case of Cooking: The Effects of Earning Inequality on House Chores among Dual-Earner Couples. *AG About Gender: Rivista internazionale di studi di genere*, 3(6).

<http://www.aboutgender.unige.it/index.php/generis/article/view/176>

Blackett, A. (2011). Introduction: Regulating decent work for domestic workers. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, 23(1), 1-46.

<http://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?public=false&handle=hein.journals/cajwo123&page=1&collection=journals>

Busch, N. (2013). The employment of migrant nannies in the UK: negotiating social class in an open market for commoditised in-home care. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 14(5), 541-557.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14649365.2012.736528>

Chen, M. A. (2011). Recognizing domestic workers, regulating domestic work: Conceptual, measurement, and regulatory challenges. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, 23(1), 167-184.

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/433411>

Constable, N. (2007). *Maid to order in Hong Kong: Stories of migrant workers*. Cornell University Press.

[https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=2LxfM16JfL8C&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=Maid+to+order+in+Hong+Kong:+stories+of+migrant+workers+\(second+edition\)&ots=7cOeOfQ5FX&sig=ZgR63pZbkkJXnKfchI06w85w0Sc](https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=2LxfM16JfL8C&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=Maid+to+order+in+Hong+Kong:+stories+of+migrant+workers+(second+edition)&ots=7cOeOfQ5FX&sig=ZgR63pZbkkJXnKfchI06w85w0Sc)

Dalla Costa, M., & James, S. (1975). *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community*. Bristol: Falling Wall Press.

<https://libcom.org/files/Dalla%20Costa%20and%20James%20-%20Women%20and%20the%20Subversion%20of%20the%20Community%20%28Pamphlet%20Layout%29.pdf>

Davidson, J. O. C. (2002). The rights and wrongs of prostitution. *Hypatia*, 17(2), 84-98.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2002.tb00767.x/full>

Davis, M. (2006) *Planet of Slums*. London: Verso.  
<http://www.versobooks.com/books/258-planet-of-slums>

Dempsey, K. C. (2001). Feelings about housework: Understanding gender differences. *Journal of Family Studies*, 7(2), 141-159.  
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.5172/jfs.7.2.141>

Fassin, D. (2011). Policing borders, producing boundaries. The governmentality of immigration in dark times. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 40, 213-226.  
<http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-anthro-081309-145847>

Federici, S. (2012). *Revolution at point zero: Housework, reproduction, and feminist struggle*. PM Press.  
[http://secure.pmpress.org/index.php?l=product\\_detail&p=420](http://secure.pmpress.org/index.php?l=product_detail&p=420)

Federici, S. (1975). *Wages against housework*. Bristol: Falling Wall Press.  
[https://biblio.csusm.edu/sites/default/files/reserves/wages\\_against\\_housework\\_1-8\\_8\\_pages.pdf](https://biblio.csusm.edu/sites/default/files/reserves/wages_against_housework_1-8_8_pages.pdf)

Ferguson, Ann, Hennessy, Rosemary and Nagel, Mechthild, (2016) Feminist Perspectives on Class and Work, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.).  
<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/feminism-class/>

Fricker, M., (2007) *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).  
<http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198237907.001.0001/acprof-9780198237907>

Gemma, Rose, Mala, Meriam, and Julia (2016) Resisting Borders: a Conversation on the Daily Struggles of Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon, *Kohl: a Journal for Body and Gender Research*, 2(2).  
<http://kohljournal.press/resisting-borders/>

Gallotti, M., (2015) Migrant Domestic Workers Across the World: global and regional estimates. *International Labour Organization Research Series*.  
[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_490162.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/briefingnote/wcms_490162.pdf)

Glenn, E. (2010). *Issei, Nisei, war bride: Three generations of Japanese American women in domestic service*. Temple University Press.

[http://www.temple.edu/tempres/titles/310\\_reg.html](http://www.temple.edu/tempres/titles/310_reg.html)

Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, E. (2010). *Migration, domestic work and affect: a decolonial approach on value and the feminization of labor* (Vol. 26). Routledge.

<https://www.routledge.com/products/9780415807630>

Gutierrez-Rodriguez, E. (2014). Domestic work–affective labor: On feminization and the coloniality of labor. In *Women's Studies International Forum* (Vol. 46, pp. 45-53). Pergamon.

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S027753951400051X>

HC Deb 29 June 2011 col 291WH

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm110629/halltext/110629h0001.htm>

Hill Maher, K. (2003). Identity Projects at Home and Labor From Abroad: The Market for Foreign Domestic Workers in Southern California and Santiago, Chile. *Center for Comparative Immigration Studies*.

<http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0tm5b6jh.pdf>

Hochschild, A. (2002). Love and Gold, in *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, ed. Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Hochschild, New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Hooghe, M., Trappers, A., Meuleman, B., & Reeskens, T. (2008). Migration to European countries: A structural explanation of patterns, 1980–2004. *International Migration Review*, 42(2), 476-504.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2008.00132.x/full>

hooks, b. (1981) *Ain't I a Woman*, South End Press.

<https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiAtoqSwZjXAhVDiRoKHV4MAK8QFggtMAA&url=https%3A%2F%2Fhamtramckfreeschool.files.wordpress.com%2F2014%2F03%2Fhooks-bell-aint-i-a-woman-black-woman-and-feminism.pdf&usg=AOvVaw28d8GbbHY-FwGWNdZUjvVi>

Human Rights Watch (2013). Middle East Failing to Protect Domestic Workers.

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/10/28/middle-east-failing-protect-domestic-workers>

International Labour Organization (2015) ILO global estimates on migrant workers.

[http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/publications/WCMS\\_436343/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/publications/WCMS_436343/lang--en/index.htm)

International Labour Organization (2013) Migrant domestic workers in action: Leaflet.

[http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/publications/WCMS\\_228575/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/publications/WCMS_228575/lang--en/index.htm)

International Labour Organization (2011) C189 - Domestic Workers Convention, (No. 189) Convention concerning decent work for domestic workers.

[http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:C189](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C189)

Jenkins, K. (2017). Rape myths and domestic abuse myths as hermeneutical injustices. *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 34(2), 191-205.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/japp.12174/full>

Jureidini, R., & Moukarbel, N. (2004). Female Sri Lankan domestic workers in Lebanon: A case of ‘contract slavery’?. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 30(4), 581-607.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13691830410001699478>

Kay, T. (1998). Having it all or doing it all? The construction of women's lifestyles in time-crunched households. *Loisir Et Société/Society and Leisure*, 21(2), 435-454.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07053436.1998.10753663>

Kittay, E. F. (2009). The moral harm of migrant carework: Realizing a global right to care. *Philosophical Topics*, 53-73.

[http://www.jstor.org/stable/43154556?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/43154556?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)

Kontos, M. (2013). Negotiating the social citizenship rights of migrant domestic workers: the right to family reunification and a family life in policies and debates. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 39(3), 409-424.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369183X.2013.733861>

Lan, P. C. (2003). Negotiating social boundaries and private zones: The micropolitics of employing migrant domestic workers. *Social Problems*, 50(4), 525-549.

<https://academic.oup.com/socpro/article-abstract/50/4/525/2261213>

Lorde, A. (1979) Comments at “The Personal and the Political Panel,” Second Sex Conference, New York.

[http://collectiveliberation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Lorde\\_The\\_Masters\\_Tools.pdf](http://collectiveliberation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Lorde_The_Masters_Tools.pdf)



Looker, E. D., & Thiessen, V. (1999). Images of work: Women's work, men's work, housework. *Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers canadiens de sociologie*, 225-254.

[http://www.jstor.org/stable/3341730?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3341730?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)

Lutz, H. (Ed.). (2012). *Migration and domestic work: A European perspective on a global theme*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd..

<http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9780754647904>

Mantouvalou, V. (2016). Modern slavery? The UK visa system and the exploitation of migrant domestic workers. *British Politics and Policy at LSE*.

<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/exploitation-of-migrant-domestic-workers-in-the-uk/>

Meagher, G. (2002). Is it wrong to pay for housework?. *Hypatia*, 17(2), 52-66.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2002.tb00765.x/full>

Miles, M. (1999), Working in the city: the case of migrant women in Swaziland’s domestic service sector, in J. Momsen (ed.), *Gender, Migration and Domestic Service*, London: Routledge.

<https://www.routledge.com/products/9780415510547>

Moors, A. (2003). Migrant domestic workers: Debating transnationalism, identity politics, and family relations. A review essay. *Comparative studies in Society and History*, 45(2), 386-394.

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/comparative-studies-in-society-and-history/article/migrant-domestic-workers-debating-transnationalism-identity-politics-and-family-relations-a-review-essay/D009F79F04518F31E364C73B08CBBB43>

Office of National Statistics. (2016) Women shoulder the responsibility of ‘unpaid work’

<http://visual.ons.gov.uk/the-value-of-your-unpaid-work/>

Parreñas, R. S. (2003). The care crisis in the Philippines: Children and transnational families in the new global economy (pp. 39-54) in Ehrenreich, B., & Hochschild, A. R. (2003). *Global woman: Nannies, maids, and sex workers in the new economy*. Macmillan.

Parreñas, R. S. (2000). Migrant Filipina domestic workers and the international division of reproductive labor. *Gender & Society*, 14(4), 560-580.

<http://gas.sagepub.com/content/14/4/560.short>

Pereira, S. (2013). Replacement migration and changing preferences: Immigrant workers in cleaning and domestic service in Portugal. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 39(7), 1141-1158.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1369183X.2013.778039>

Rodríguez, E. G. (2007). The "hidden side" of the new economy: On transnational migration, domestic work, and unprecedented intimacy. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 28(3), 60-83.

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/224092/summary>

Romero, M. (1997). Who takes care of the maid’s children? Exploring the costs of domestic service. *Feminism and families*, 151-169.

<https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=jq4OIgHtNUAC&oi=fnd&pg=PA151&dq=romero+who+takes+care+of+the+maid%27s&ots=gCSW3gMN9C&sig=kiQUlual3wRRDprRfjbk7gS79TU#v=onepage&q=romero%20who%20takes%20care%20of%20the%20maid%27s&f=false>

Sayer, L. C. (2010). Trends in housework. Dividing the domestic: Men, women, and household work in cross-national perspective, 19-38, in Treas, J., & Drobnič, S. (Eds.). (2010). *Dividing the domestic: Men, women, and household work in cross-national perspective*. Stanford University Press.

<https://pure.rug.nl/ws/files/14664432/2010-LippeTvd-Womans.pdf#page=37>

Shahvisi, A. (2015) From Resisting Definition to Resisting Exploitation: The Ongoing Struggle of Domestic Workers in Lebanon. *Truthout*.  
<http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/29820-from-resisting-definition-to-resisting-exploitation-the-ongoing-struggle-of-domestic-workers-in-lebanon>

Sparr, P. (Ed.). (1994). *Mortgaging women's lives: Feminist critiques of structural adjustment*. Palgrave Macmillan.

<http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/distributed/M/bo20850848.html>

Stasiulis, D. K., & Bakan, A. B. (1997). Regulation and resistance: Strategies of migrant domestic workers in Canada and internationally. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 6(1), 31-57.

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/011719689700600103>

Tomei, M. (2011). Decent work for domestic workers: Reflections on recent approaches to tackle informality. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, 23(1), 185-212.

<http://www.utpjournals.press/doi/abs/10.3138/cjwl.23.1.185>

Tronto, J. (2011). Privatizing neo-colonialism: Migrant domestic care workers, Partial citizenship and responsibility. In *Europeanization, Care and Gender* (pp. 165-181). Palgrave Macmillan UK.

[https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9780230321021\\_11](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9780230321021_11)

Uramoto, Y. (2014) Domestic work, work like any other. *International Labour Organization*

[http://www.ilo.org/hanoi/Informationresources/Publicinformation/comments-and-analysis/WCMS\\_246974/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/hanoi/Informationresources/Publicinformation/comments-and-analysis/WCMS_246974/lang--en/index.htm)

Veblen, T. (1889) *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*, Macmillan.

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/833/833-h/833-h.htm>

Vora, N., & Koch, N. (2015). Everyday inclusions: Rethinking ethnocracy, kafala, and belonging in the Arabian Peninsula. *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 15(3), 540-552.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/sena.12158/full>